

MINUTES
GREEN BAY PLAN COMMISSION
Monday, February 10, 2014
City Hall, Room 604
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Queoff-Vice Chair, Sidney Bremer, Tim Duckett, Tim Gilbert, Ald. Jerry Wiezbiskie, and Jim Reck

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mary Beth Conard—Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Lockery, Paul Neumeyer, Nic Sparacio, Ald. David Boyce, Daniel Grove, Ald. Mark Steuer, and Jesse Michalski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the minutes from the January 27, 2014, Plan Commission meeting

A motion was made by Ald. J. Wiezbiskie and seconded by S. Bremer to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2014, Plan Commission meeting. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. (ZP 14-01) Discussion and action on a request to authorize a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the installation of a solar photovoltaic system in the 3500 Block of Church Road, submitted by Jesse Michalski, Eland Electric, on behalf of Sister of St. Francis of the Holy Cross, property owner. (Ald. Wiezbiskie, District 1)

P. Neumeyer stated this is a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the installation of several ground-mounted photovoltaic panels in the 3500 Block of Church Road. This is a 5.7 acre parcel that is currently a vacant lot and located north of Church Road, east of Nicolet Drive, and east of the Bay. The Barina Creek Parkway runs along the west side of the property. There is a tributary that runs east/west and cuts the property in half. The Sisters of St Francis of the Holy Cross are the current owners of the property as well as the 12 acre parcel to the north. The current zoning is Low Density Residential. The general placement of the panels would be on the northern edge of the property, north of the Barina tributary. There are 416 ground mounted panels proposed and would face south with the panels not exceeding 9.5 feet in height. Staff notified affected property owners and did not receive any calls, questions, or objections. Staff is recommending approval, subject to compliance with Development Standards a, b, e, and f as well as the combination of the subject parcel and the northern parcel containing the convent.

Ald. M. Steuer asked who would be using the panels as an energy source.

P. Neumeyer stated he believed it was strictly for the Sisters to supplement their energy.

Ald. D. Boyce asked who was responsible for maintaining the solar panels.

Ald. J. Wiezbiskie stated that they have a full-time maintenance program and person.

L. Queoff asked for clarification from P. Neumeyer regarding the recommendation. She asked if section d of the Chapter 13-1611 Development Standards was left off intentionally. He stated that it was.

L. Queoff suspended the rules to allow comments from the public.

Jesse Michalski - 1000 Hillcrest Drive, Kaukauna: J. Michalski stated he was here to answer any questions regarding the proposed solar layout for the property on Nicolet Drive. They are proposing a 113 KW solar system south of the convent. The view will be protected by trees and shrubs and cannot be seen from the roadway. The modules will be installed in 3 unequal rows. The rows get shorter as the trees get closer as there can be no shading on modules.

Ald. J. Wiezbiskie asked J. Michalski if he has previously installed these types of devices and what type of maintenance is required for the panels. He also asked if he recommended the panels be kept clean for the efficiency of the operation and about weed control.

J. Michalski stated he has installed these before and the maintenance for them is zero. There are no mechanical or moving parts and they don't need to be cleaned and will be installed at a 35 degree angle. He would not recommend cleaning off the panels. They will gather snow in the winter and it will just reduce the amount of energy produced. The snow will melt off once the sun comes out and warms up the surface glass on the module. He stated that it would not be worth the extra energy generated for someone to physically walk out to the modules in winter and rake all 416 modules. All energy calculations included some snow shading. As far as them getting dusty and dirty, the rain will wash them off. The weeds that are out in the field are known as "short growth" and will not grow or wrap themselves around the panels. It was recommended that the Sisters not plant any fields around the panels.

T. Duckett asked if the heat produced would attract any rodents or other type of animals, especially deer.

J. Michalski stated that there isn't enough heat generated to create a habitat.

L. Queoff returned to regular order of business.

A motion was made by T. Gilbert and seconded by S. Bremer to approve the request to authorize a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the installation of a solar photovoltaic system in the 3500 Block of Church Road subject to compliance with Development Standards a, b, e, and f as well as the combination of the subject parcel and the northern parcel containing the convent.

INFORMATIONAL:

2. (PP 12-07) Progress report on the Downtown Master Plan Update.

N. Sparacio introduced the update on the Downtown Master Plan. They are reaching the tail end of the planning project. Daniel Grove, from Lakota Group, is present to give a brief overview on the plan. No action is needed on the plan at this time, but this update is being provided in preparation for the upcoming approval process. The draft document will be provided to the Plan Commission in the near future, and will be presented in March for review and approval by the Plan Commission, RDA, and City Council.

Daniel Grove – Lakota Group: D. Grove stated there has been a lot of community input including stakeholder interviews, public workshops, and surveys, which showed very positive results. Through this process there is a vision, goals and objectives which are set to guide future decision making. There are also a wide range of recommendations including a list of short term achievable projects and long term visionary goals. Recommendations include a blend of policy based initiatives, public improvements, development, and redevelopment opportunities. The plan includes implementation strategies for each of the key recommendations. The plan is being created to serve as a living document with the intent to be used regularly. We want to have a big vision and then break it down into strategies that can be accomplished over a period of 10 years.

The Catalytic Projects are bigger projects sites, bigger initiatives and will have a significant positive impact on the downtown. One is the Larsen Green Site. We did ask for feedback from the community as to what they wanted to see. A vision of residential and commercial mixed-use development is recommended. Another catalytic project is the Monroe Corridor. They wanted to make sure that the corridor was positioned well for the future and creates a vision for how to get there. The On Broadway District parking enhancements is another near-term, very achievable project. These three projects we think can happen more quickly.

D. Grove continued to explain the mid- to long-term and more visionary projects. On the West side of the river we have shoreline enhancements, which are envisioned as being a little more naturalized compared to the City Deck, and includes the Hubbard Promenade. This concept improves the character from Ashland through Broadway, across the railroad tracks to the shoreline. The connections from the neighborhoods to the core of downtown to the river were very important. Hubbard is one of those main connections. The downtown core enhancement concept is very long term and there are many moving pieces to get there. This includes the town square concept and repositioning of the Baylake Bank building to create a new, full-block development site for office, commercial, and parking uses. There will be more detail coming in the draft report.

There are a wide range of recommended public improvements, for example: the East River Trail connection, bridge enhancements to make them more pedestrian friendly, various streetscape enhancements, transit enhancements to help link the east and west sides of the river, and improved wayfinding signage.

Recommendations will also address policies and programs. Key areas of policy guidance include design review, historic preservation, cultural planning, complete streets, and parking. In each of these areas, the goal is to ensure that city policies and programs are having a positive impact on the desired character of the downtown.

D. Grove then explained the prioritization and implementation components of the draft plan. In terms of next steps, we are currently working with the Steering Committee to refine the document with the hopes of getting the draft to the Plan Commission by March 2014.

S. Bremer asked how he would defend having historic preservation and complete streets as priority policies. She explained that she is supportive of these approaches, but would like to know how the planning process arrived at these recommendations.

D. Grove stated that Historic Preservation has been a topic the public has brought to the table as an important concern throughout the process. The concern is that we have lost many of our

historic resources in downtown and need to work to preserve what we have left. Another strong theme heard at the 2nd Workshop was to support future generations of Green Bay and the role of the Downtown area. The growing trends include the desire to live closer to where you work, live closer to culture, shopping, and restaurants, and get around without the use of a car, having a strong pedestrian and bicycle network; having the freedom not to have to drive or park a car.

Ald. J. Wiezbiskie asked how the bicycle and pedestrian plan recommendations fit into the trail system plan. He also inquired if the consultant was finding that more successful cities have a historic downtown area.

D. Grove stated how the bicycle and pedestrian recommendations must consider both the recreational / fitness element as well as the transportation element. On-street facilities and trails must work together to meet the community's needs. Most successful cities work hard to recognize and preserve the historic resources they have, especially now that there are more tools available to help achieve this goal.

N. Sparacio explained some of the Steering Committee's discussion around historic preservation. The language you will see in the Downtown Plan will be to preserve the remaining historically significant and architecturally significant resources. Clarification on historic preservation goals is needed from the community before proceeding to implementation.

M. Steuer stated he remembers how the historic preservation ethic has changed over time. There is a growing need to have preservation ordinances in place.

S. Bremer stated that the plan's focus on the river, historic buildings, and pedestrian-friendly streets is on track with what people like in cities and what makes them successful.

L. Queoff asked what was meant by parking enhancements for the Broadway District and wanted to hear a little more about the transit.

D. Grove explained the Broadway parking improvement concept plan. The idea is to tie everything together, make it more cohesive, and even create some green space. He explained the transit enhancements concept, including the downtown circulator recommendation. The goal is to create stronger connectivity across both sides of the Fox River and enhance the business environment. N. Sparacio stated that a factor that could contribute to the success of such a service is that some private employers in the downtown are already shuttling employees from parking lots to their offices. A partnership could expand on these already functioning systems.

L. Queoff stated that there is a parking issue in the downtown area. People are parking everywhere and you have to pay for parking almost everywhere.

D. Grove stated that is one of the things being looked at with the parking policy. We are looking at having more shared lots than single use lots.

Ald. M. Steuer asked plan staff if they feared there was an imbalance for the potential for development or redevelopment along with the number of people living / businesses downtown and if there is a disconnect in terms of what is happening between real and what is expected.

N. Sparacio stated one of the things being assessed is the return on investment in the downtown. The plan assessed this and showed a positive return based on increased property

value, overall health of the downtown TIF districts, and the unique opportunity for very high tax-base density in the downtown environment. Another concern is the moderate amount of commercial real estate vacancy. Filling existing spaces is something we do have to keep an eye on as new buildings are being built, and a successful downtown depends on seeing a healthy balance.

M. Steuer asked if there are other things besides TIF that can be used to help fund new development downtown.

D. Grove gave an overview of the financing mechanisms addressed in the draft plan.

OTHER:

3. (ZP 13-43) The request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to authorize a two-family dwelling in an Office/Residential (OR) District located at 805 Cherry Street, submitted by property owner Chad Harris, was withdrawn by the applicant.

Director's Update on Council Actions

B. Lockery informed the Plan Commission of the following items:

- The Common Council did forward both Comprehensive Plan Amendment requests for their public hearing on 03/04/2014 for the North Broadway area and Shawano Avenue.
- The Common Council also approved rezoning at 1026 9th Street, the Wellness Center.

SUBMITTED PETITIONS: (for informational purposes only)

A motion was made by Ald. J. Wiezbiskie and seconded by T. Duckett to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.